

HT393
C22M3
A37
1994
Suppl.



THE MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN

WHAT IS THE COUNTYWIDE PLAN?

This illustration of the 1994 Marin Countywide Plan shows how the land in the county has been identified by its basic uses, such as housing and commercial development, agriculture, parks and open space. It divides the county into three *environmental corridors*: City-Centered, Inland Rural and Coastal Recreation. In addition, the plan identifies three *resource conservation areas* that overlap the environmental corridors: Stream and Creekside, Coastal, and Bayfront.



The plan is the result of more than four years of research and community participation that looked at current land use and projections for future growth. Its policies manage development in unincorporated parts of the county and serve as guidelines for the cities and towns of Marin.

This plan is an update of the Countywide Plan first created in 1973 and revised in 1982. It contains many new features designed to further preserve and protect the natural environment and to encourage a variety of land uses for a diverse population.

WHY HAVE A COUNTYWIDE PLAN?

Marin County covers an area of 520 square miles. Yet it is home to 230,000 people, more than 12,000 businesses and about 80,000 farm animals. Many species of wildlife make Marin their home. More than two-thirds of this magnificent and special land has been preserved as park lands by federal, state and local governments. The Marin Countywide Plan balances the current and future needs for the urban, rural and natural uses of this land through the beginning of the 21st century.

GOALS OF THE PLAN

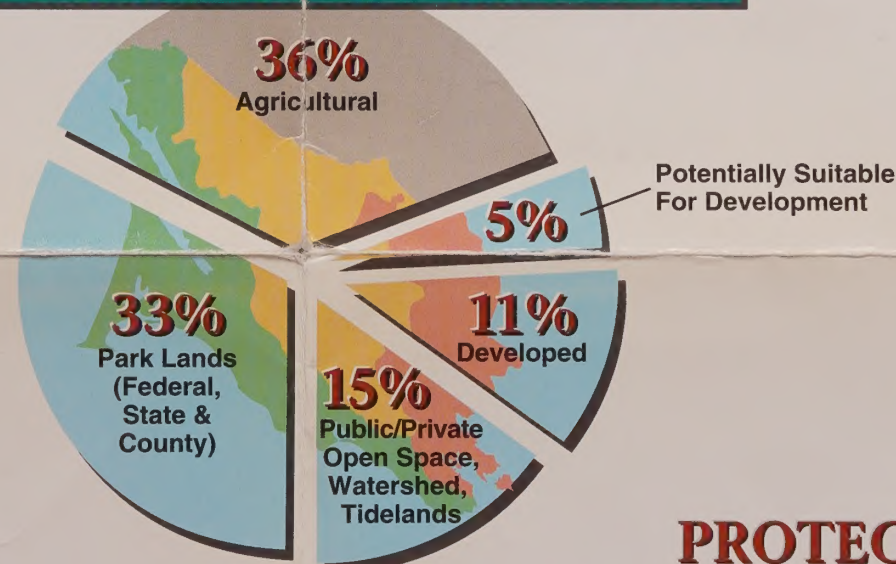
The Marin Countywide Plan includes a set of goals that will contribute to a high quality of life for all the county's residents, visitors and the natural and domestic animal and plant life. Many points of view were studied and considered during public hearings on the plan. The adopted plan represents a balanced approach that will:

- Preserve and enhance agricultural, recreational and open space resources and the natural environment.
- Aim for high quality in the built (developed) environment.
- Preserve and enhance Marin's special small-town community character and architectural heritage.
- Create housing and a variety of job opportunities for people of all income levels in the county.
- Coordinate transportation and land use planning with other agencies to reduce dependence upon automobiles, and the traffic congestion and air pollution they cause.
- Conserve natural resources by reducing consumption and encouraging the recycling and reuse of products and materials.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The Marin Countywide Plan is a living document which will not just sit on a shelf after it is adopted. The policies and maps will be used to review all proposals for new development, which must conform with the plan. In addition, the County will need to change zoning and adopt specific procedures for carrying out the plan's directives. The plan will be a major reference point for public and private decision-making for many years to come.

HOW MARIN LANDS ARE USED



ENVIRONMENTAL CORRIDORS



The plan divides the county into three environmental *corridors*: City-Centered, Inland Rural and Coastal Recreation. Each of these environmental zones, running roughly north and south, has its own set of issues regarding development and conservation of land.



CITY-CENTERED CORRIDOR

Running along Highway 101 and next to San Pablo Bay, this is the corridor where most people live and work. Future urban development will be concentrated here. Bayfront areas, ridgetops and stream banks in this corridor are protected from inappropriate development.

INLAND RURAL CORRIDOR

Located in the central and northwestern part of the county, this area is designated mainly for agricultural and compatible uses, such as watersheds. Many of the county's dairy farms and ranches and a few small communities are located here.

COASTAL RECREATION CORRIDOR

This corridor follows the western edge of the county and includes Point Reyes National Seashore and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, both national park lands. The area is designated for parks, agriculture, and small rural communities.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION AREAS

In order to further regulate and protect natural lands, the Countywide Plan identifies three resource conservation areas and zones. Overlapping the environmental corridors, these include:

Stream and Creekside Conservation Area

Natural seasonal and year-round streams and other water-courses are irreplaceable and should be fully protected. Streams and their surrounding banks (up to 100 feet out from each side from the bank) are to be used primarily for necessary water supplies, flood control projects, agriculture, fish and wildlife habitats and recreational trails. Roads and utility lines (except crossings), livestock pens, dumping, motorized vehicles and new buildings are prohibited.

Coastal Conservation Zone

This zone covers the Pacific Ocean shoreline of the county and extends inland 1,000 yards or more. It coincides with the lands regulated by the California Coastal Commission, which has approved local plans to guide further development and protect coastal resources.

Bayfront Conservation Zone

Wetlands in unincorporated areas along San Francisco and San Pablo Bay are designated for additional protection. All technically feasible measures will be taken to reduce damage and loss to remaining original wetlands. If any wetlands are developed, two acres must be restored for each acre lost.

The Bayfront Conservation Zone contains three sub-zones: *Tidelands*, which includes tidal and seasonal marshes, lagoons and other natural wetlands and some low-lying grasslands; *Diked Bay Marshlands* and *Agricultural*, former marshlands now diked and/or filled for agricultural and urban uses; and *Shoreline*, which covers steep shoreline areas between roadways and tidelands.

The Countywide Plan specifies rules for further uses in these areas so that diverse wildlife and aquatic habitats can be preserved and enhanced, affordable housing can be considered, and public access can be provided along the waterfront.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Several sections of the plan deal with the use of land, housing and economic activities, and the kinds of transportation improvements which will be needed. A series of maps indicates exactly how land in the unincorporated areas of the county can be used. General direction is provided for cities, which carry out specific policies in their own general plans.

Coordination between cities and the County is an important component of the plan. The County and the cities have formed a Countywide Planning Agency which comments on the Countywide Plan, general plans, and proposals for major development projects. Because the agency has a countywide perspective, it can help to coordinate planning and manage growth.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Objectives and policies for future housing development in Marin encourage the location of new housing near job-producing commercial areas to reduce the need for commuting, and mixing residential and commercial land use to make more land available for housing development.

The plan increases the amount of affordable housing required in new developments from a minimum of 10 percent to 15 percent and encourages higher density housing in downtown areas and building homes over commercial and parking structures. Increased building density will be allowed for projects with a high percentage of affordable housing.

TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The primary transportation goal of the Countywide Plan is the efficient movement of people and goods. The plan emphasizes a variety of transportation modes – buses, carpools, ferries and bicycles – to achieve this goal.

The plan identifies projects needed to improve traffic flow, while serving projected development in Marin's cities, towns and unincorporated area. These projects include completing the bus and carpool lanes on Highway 101, providing more bus and ferry service, creating bikeways and possibly providing a commuter train between Marin and Sonoma.

It is recognized that not all of the money needed to pay for these future improvements has been obtained. However, the plan does identify potential ways to raise the money such as a one-cent sales tax dedicated for transportation improvements and "traffic mitigation fees" levied on new development. These fees would pay for a share of the local road improvements needed to serve new development. New development may also be charged a "regional fee" established by the cities and the County to pay for improvements to Highway 101 or transit service.

The plan points out that if funding is not secured from a combination of sources, traffic congestion will get worse. Cities and the County may need to revise their land use policies to reduce the amount of new development allowed by their general plans.



ECONOMIC ELEMENT

Since a sound economy is an important component of the County's future, the plan includes an economic element to provide essential information for decision-makers and to encourage economic vitality.

The preliminary Economic Element in the plan calls for a sustainable local economy which results in balanced communities, where residents can find jobs, housing, shopping, community services and recreation. The plan recommends that the County seek a diversity of employers who can provide jobs at all income levels for residents.

Businesses and industries are identified that not only provide the types of needed jobs, but impact favorably on local neighborhoods, improve the tax base and have the least harmful effect on the environment. These include advanced technology, science, communications, education, information, entertainment and international trade.

The County has established an Economic Commission to complete the task of recommending economic policies and to produce a detailed Economic Element.

PROTECTION & PRESERVATION



EARTHQUAKE PROTECTION

The plan recognizes that Marin County is in an active geologic fault region where earthquakes are likely. To reduce the loss of life and property, the plan requires all new buildings to be engineered and constructed so that the dangers of seismic shaking are diminished. It urges that existing publicly owned buildings be strengthened or relocated. All new subdivisions must submit soil and geologic studies before their building plans can be approved.

FIRE PROTECTION

Because Marin has large areas of forested, chaparral and grass covered lands, combined with a long dry season, it is vulnerable to dangerous wildfires. Structural fires in homes and workplaces pose additional threats.

The plan calls for maps showing wildland fire hazard areas to be available to planners, developers and the public. State fire safety standards for new housing construction will be enforced by the Marin County Fire Department. New and replacement house roofs will be constructed of fire-retardant materials.

The County will develop uniform standards for clearing brush away from structures in fire hazard areas. The plan encourages the reduction of hazardous brush in wildlands in an environmentally sound manner.

FLOOD PROTECTION

Floods in Marin can be caused by many sources — rainfall runoff, high tides and dam rupture. The Plan recommends that the county reduce losses to floods by limiting the construction of new developments in flood-prone areas.

The County will encourage multiple uses of historic flood lands to include agriculture, open space, education and ecological study. The construction of flood barriers, levees or dikes that would divert flooding to other areas, should be prohibited.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

The County's goal is to enhance and preserve farming, growing and ranching activities. The plan recognizes that agricultural lands have played an important part in Marin's history and contribute substantially to the County's economy.

The plan recommends that the County consider more uniform zoning laws that will preserve the integrity of agricultural lands. Other innovative techniques for protecting these lands include the transfer and purchase of development rights. The County will also consider adopting a "right-to-farm" law to protect growers and ranchers from nuisance complaints made by their non-agricultural neighbors.

WILDLIFE PRESERVATION

The Countywide Plan strengthens the protection of plant and wildlife habitats. Specific measures promote the continued health and survival of local rare and endangered species, marine and freshwater animals and plants, and migrating birds that make Marin their temporary home.



Plan policies resulted in the establishment of a Species Protection Resource Center, which provides accurate information about the impact of proposed developments on wildlife habitats. The center will serve as a clearinghouse for biological information gathered from other governmental agencies and natural resource protection organizations.

The plan also strongly recommends that the County pass a law that would protect significant native, historical and large neighborhood trees from being cut down prior to a proposed development. Native oak woodlands and redwood groves would be offered special protected status to ensure their long-term survival.

THE MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN

The Countywide Plan, shown on this poster and summarized in more detail on the back, sets Marin County land use goals and policies to help coordinate how people will live, work and play in harmony with the natural environment for many years to come.

The Countywide Plan is not just a map of development zones and environmental corridors. It should be viewed as the blueprint for the future of Marin.



Marin has nearly 143,000 acres of parkland and open space, comprising almost 42% of the County's land area.



Open Space Areas serve many purposes, including the preservation of wildlife habitats, recreation, watershed and scenery.



In 1970 there were 57,700 jobs in Marin. Twenty years later, jobs had increased 79% to 103,030. By 2010, it's projected there will be 30,090 more jobs.



The City-Centered Corridor, where most people live and work, concentrates development amidst protected natural areas.

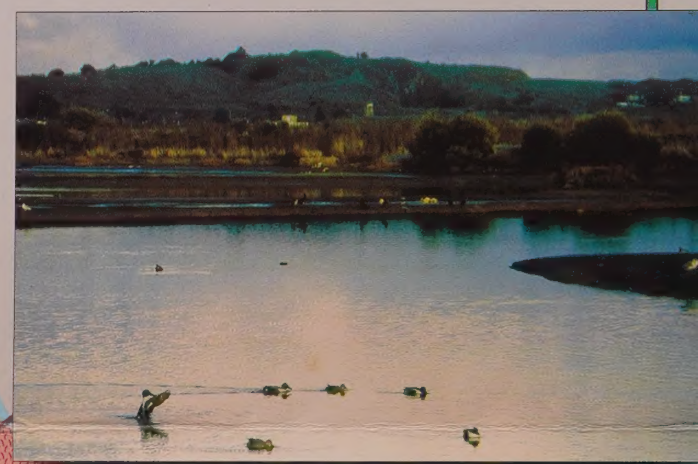
S O N O M A
C O U N T Y



More than 43% of Marin homeowners and about 58% of renters spend 25% or more of their income on housing.



The Inland Rural Corridor, designated mainly for agriculture and compatible uses, contains most of Marin's farms and ranches.



The Bayfront Conservation Zone protects wetlands and wildlife habitats along the County's eastern shore.



Marin is home to about 70 rare or threatened plant and animal species.



Between 1990 and build-out, commuting within Marin is projected to increase by 45% and commuting between Sonoma and Marin by 33%.



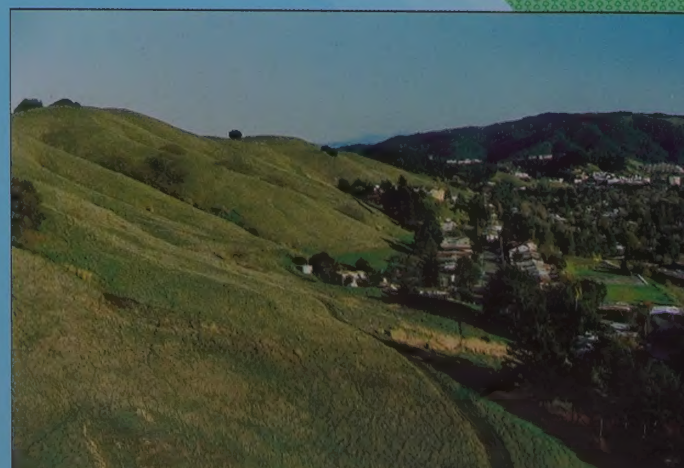
The Coastal Recreation Corridor is designated for parks, such as the Point Reyes National Seashore, rural communities and agriculture.



Public schooling in Marin is provided by 15 elementary school districts, two high school districts and two unified school districts.



Stream and Creekside Conservation Areas protect natural, seasonal and year-long streams and watercourses, their banks and wildlife.



Ridge and Upland Greenbelt Areas separate communities and preserve grassy hillsides, wooded hillsides and ridgetops.

MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN
Adopted January 18, 1994
Marin County
Community Development Agency
Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 308,
San Rafael, CA 94903
Ph. 415-499-6269

Coastal Recreation Corridor	Bayfront Conservation Zone
Inland Rural Corridor	Parks & Open Space
City-Centered Corridor	Water District Lands

Produced in Marin by The PR Group • Design: Bulls-Eye Productions • Photography: William Binzen • Prepress output: Desktop Publishing • Printing: Strahm
Printed on recycled paper

